

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 197541

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: MASS, IR

SUBJ: TU-22 BOMBERS IN IRAQ

REF: TEHRAN 6982

1. YOU MAY CONFIRM TO THE SHAH AND PRIME MINISTER THAT AS OF SEPT. 24 THE USSR HAS DELIVERED 14 RPT 14 TU-22 (BLINDER) MEDIUM BOMBERS TO IRAQ. THIS IS THE FIRST EXPORT OF THIS AIRCRAFT TO NON-SOVIET FORCES. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS IS THE RESULT OF AN AGREEMENT REACHED IN EARLY 1973 BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. IT IS FURTHER UNDERSTOOD THAT IRAQI PILOTS HAVE RECEIVED TRAINING IN THESE AIRCRAFT IN THE USSR SINCE MID-SUMMER.

2. FOLLOWING DATA ON TU-22'S MAY BE USEFUL TO YOU:
AIRCRAFT ENTERED SERVICE IN 1962. IT HAS SUPERSONIC DASH CAPABILITY OF MACH 1.8 AND COMBAT CEILING OF 47,600 FT.
BOMB LOAD IS 6,600 LB.

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3. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE DEAL MAY HAVE ORIGINATED IN THE SUMMER OF 1972, AFTER THE SOVIETS WERE EXPELLED FROM EGYPT. AT THAT TIME THE SOVIETS MADE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO COURT SYRIA AND IRAQ, AND AS A RESULT IRAQ SIGNED A TREATY OF

FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION WITH THE USSR; IT SEEMS SAFE TO ASSUME THAT AS A RESULT OF SIGNING THIS TREATY IRAQ GOT PROMISES OF NEW ARMS DELIVERIES FROM THE USSR.

4. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT IRAQ'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WEST AND TOWARD ITS NEIGHBORS HAS CHANGED CONSIDERABLY IN THE MEANTIME. IRAQ HAS IMPROVED ITS RELATIONS WITH WESTERN EUROPE CONSIDERABLY, HAS BEGUN TRADING AGAIN WITH US FIRMS (TWO LARGE CONTRACTS FOR BOEING AIRCRAFT AND WITH BROWN AND ROOT FOR AN OIL TERMINAL, HAVE BEEN SIGNED RECENTLY) AND HAS MODERATED ITS POSITION WITH REGARDS TO ITS IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS, KUWAIT IN PARTICULAR.

5. WE RECOGNIZE, HOWEVER, THAT IRAQI POLICY HAS BEEN ERRATIC AND THAT TU-22'S AND OTHER RECENT SOVIET ARMS DELIVERIES GIVE IRAQ ADDED MILITARY POTENTIAL. WE WILL ACCORDINGLY BE KEEPING SITUATION UNDER CAREFUL REVIEW. RUSH

SECRET

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